

DATE: June 22, 1984

TO: Division File ✓

FROM: Ken Mensing *KAM*

SUBJECT: LPC 16304538 - St. Clair County - East St. Louis/Wastex #2

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



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On June 19, 1984, I spoke with Mike Lancaster by phone. Mr. Lancaster is an employee of Fruehauf Trailers, 2001 Broadway, East St. Louis, Illinois. He informed me that he was the local shop steward and that he and fellow employees have been getting headaches and feeling ill lately. He also complained of various unpleasant odors in the area. He then said he just discovered a large pile of dirt-like material, having a chemical odor, in a building next to the one he works in. I told him I would meet him the following morning for an inspection of the situation.

I arrived at the Fruehauf Office at 8:25 a.m. on June 20, 1984. There I met with Mr. Lancaster and the local Fruehauf supervisor, Joe Bennett. At the office, Mr. Lancaster told me more about the situation. He said that pigeons have been dying in the area. He also said that the odors were so bad on June 18 that the employees were sent home at around 10:30 a.m. Following this brief discussion, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Lancaster and myself walked back to the adjacent building where the waste pile was located. Observations revealed the presence of a pile of sawdust mixed with various paint wastes, solvents, etc. The pile measured about 60 ft. by 30 ft. by an average of 8 ft. high. A strong chemical odor was prevalent inside the building. No odor was noticed at a distance exceeding 50 feet from the building. Upon observing the pile, it was apparent that the material came from Wastex Research, which is located next door. I asked if they had ever seen trucks going back to the building and they said no. I asked Mr. Bennett who owned the property where Fruehauf operates and where the waste pile is located. He said that a Mr. Leirer owns all of the old glass factory property north of Broadway. I asked Mr. Bennett if he knew Mr. Leirer's address and phone number. He said yes, he had it back at the office. He gave me the following: Vernon Leirer, 2701 Converse, East St. Louis, Illinois 62207, 618/271-6250. Mr. Leirer owns Five Star Metal Fabricators at the above address. Mr. Bennett called Mr. Leirer and he showed up shortly. Mr. Leirer confirmed that he owned the subject property and has so for the past 3 or 4 years. I asked him who he presently leases to and he said; Fruehauf and Mr. Wayne Miles who operates a body shop on the property. I asked him if he leases building space or has any business dealings with Wastex Research. He said nothing formal, but that he has a verbal agreement with Jim Markle since last winter whereby Wastex could use dry floor space for mixing wastes with sawdust. Following these discussions, Messrs. Lancaster, Bennett, Leirer and I returned to the waste pile area. At this time, I collected two samples and took two photographs of the waste pile.

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Shortly thereafter, Mr. Bennett went over to get Jim Markle. Upon his arrival, further discussions on the matter ensued. Mr. Markle said that Wastex has been utilizing the building for storage for about the last six months. He said that the material would be removed by the middle of July and disposed of at Chem Met Landfill in Michigan. The Fruehauf employees gathered around and explained their concerns to us. Allegedly, people open burn in the general area, including burning the insulation off wiring, which has produced unpleasant odors and fumes. The employees said they have experienced headaches and a burning sensation in the eyes. The dead pigeons also have them worried. Mr. Markle said he is going to have an autopsy run on one of the dead birds. I departed at 10:15 a.m.

KGM:jlr

cc: Southern Region
Phil Van Ness

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